Waiting

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Summary: It's been a year and a half since Isaac, Felix, and Co. left Prox as heroes. But one left behind something more than just a hero's reputation. R&R please. I don't own GS! Chapter 1 revised

Chapter 1: Prologue

So I re-wrote this chapter slightly. Added a few bits and pieces to make it less confusing.

So here we are, with...

Golden Sun: Waiting

Prologue

She had waited for so long.

She knew she should move on of course, he most certainly would have. But she couldn't. Every other thought she had had centered on him.

It had been a year and a half, and nothing had changed. It was the same routine of forcing herself up, with hardly enough willpower to face the glaring sun or the biting snow. The weather up in the north was always an extreme. During the spring and summer, the sun was blinding. During the winter the sun was gone, replaced with a thick flurry of snow that limited one's eyesight to an arms length.

It was spring now. The snow was half-melted, but the temperature still forced the north's inhabitants to bundle up. The few trees that survived the winter's harsh storms were beginning to green again, filling the air with their perfume. The dead grass, which had not seen the light of day for nearly five months began drinking the melted water and converting the suns rays to energy. The world seemed at peace from the north. Life was beginning anew, and all the old problems of the world had vanished.

A lone figure sat atop a cliff overlooking the frozen ocean, seeming to wait for something, but what she was waiting for could not be seen, for the view of the dark blue ocean stretched for miles. She closed her eyes and let her head hang, as questions buzzed around in her head like a swarm of angry bees.

"When are you coming back, like you promised?" She asked, picking her head back up to stare longingly at the frozen waters. "What's taking you so long?"

Her mind had begun formulating answers for that question, when another person sat down next to her and interrupted her train of thought.

"Hey, Karst," He said quietly, "You okay? You've been spending a lot of time up here lately."

Wordlessly she stood and started walking away. "I'm tired, I'm going to bed."

He sighed and watched as she walked away, the light (by northern standards) woolen cloak she wore flapping in the breeze.

Karst made it to her house with little difficulty. The sky was nearing dusk and everyone was inside eating with their families. She shrugged her cloak off in the entrance way to her small house and made her way into the small bedroom in the back. The room had a fireplace and a bed, but that was all she needed. Without bothering to undress, she climbed atop the bed and stared out the small window at the setting sun. Her thoughts drifted far and wide across the world, coming to rest over the form of a sleeping man, living in a town that sat near the remains of a collapsed mountain.

"Please," she whispered as sleep overtook her, "please remember that I'm here."

And remember her he did. For at that moment, as the sun sank on her half of the world, it was just rising on his.

Much like her, he forced himself out of bed, unwilling to face the daily trials of life. He groaned as he pulled his clothes on, a plain cotton shirt and pair of brown trousers, his messy hair falling into his eyes. A knock at his door told him that breakfast was ready and that he needed to be downstairs soon, lest it grow cold.

"I'm coming," He said, pulling himself out into the hallway. He trudged downstairs and sat down at the table, where a full plate was waiting for him.

Ten minutes later his plate was half finished as he lazily trailed his fork through his eggs. He drifted away from the present, his mind blocking out his surroundings to contemplate that which he deemed important, as men are known to do.

'*She's probably married by now,'* He thought, his mood sinking, *'Kids, hell, I'm probably not a worth a damn to her anywa-'*

His thoughts were interrupted as a small apple bounced its way across the table and hit him in the forehead. Startled, he glared up across the table at the offender, who only smiled at him and giggled.

"Wake up," she demanded; readying another apple in case he spaced out again, "I've been trying to get your attention for nearly ten minutes. What's going on with you Felix?"

"Nothing," he replied, before turning back to his food and finishing off what was left. He got up and tossed the wooden plate into a bucket of soapy water. He ignored the pestering questions as he pulled on his brown cloak and exited the house. Outside it was cold, and the grass that surrounded his newly built home was stiff with frost; fall was beginning. People bustled and rushed around him, fighting time to finish building their homes before winter's bad weather hit.

"Mornin' Felix!" Isaac, his longtime friend called out to him. Felix nodded in reply and watched as Isaac used his 'Move' Psynergy to lift up a pile of lumber and place it gently on a lift that would raise it to the roof.

Felix began walking, not in any real direction, but just someplace that would give him some solitude.

"She's forgotten me," he told himself quietly, trying to find a reason for having avoided seeing her, "she wouldn't want me anyway."

His feet took him north, up to the ruins of his old hometown and to the lip of the crater where the ruins of the old mountain sat. He sighed as he sat down, and began lazily lifting rocks with his Psynergy and flinging them further then he could see.

"If she could see me now," he laughed, "She would kick me a week into the future if she saw me wasting my power to throw rocks."

He stopped momentarily to reflect on the fact that, even if she were to be kicking him, he'd enjoy it, because-

"I'd be able to see her," he said flatly, realizing how much he did want to see her, no matter what happened.

"Why don't I go see her?" he asked himself, "What is holding me back?"

The fear that she has forgotten you entirely, for starters.

"No," he told himself, "She couldn't have forgotten me. I... hope."

He stood and began walking the lip of the crater passing by the remains of old homes.

Or the fact that you betrayed *her.*

Frustration shot through him as his own words hit home. The ground shook slightly as the frustration turned to anger and he balled his hands into fists. He took a deep breath and let it run its course, and eventually, after a few moments the shaking subsided. He stopped walking and looked around; sighing as he knew that he'd been procrastinating for far too long. With a slight nod, and a muttered "Alright, I'll go," he turned back towards his home to embark on another journey across the world.

Chapter 2: Running Away

A/N: Well, here's chapter 2. It's still kinda short, only about 2,000 words, but I'm working on making them longer.

Isaac: So will we play a part in this at all?

Me: A small one, yes.

Isaac: *grumbles* *holds up a sign reading 'He doesn't own GS or any characters, all of that is sole property of Camelot'*

Chapter 1: Running Away

It was night, and he was packing.

He hurriedly stuffed clothes and equipment into a bag, hoping to be far gone from his home by daybreak. He froze as a soft knock came at his door. He turned to see the soft flickering light of a candle shine from underneath the door.

"Felix?" Jenna's voice sounded through the door. Felix felt a tightness in his chest that could only be attributed to panic. Hastily, he kicked his bag and the loose equipment scattered about his room under his bed and opened the door.

His sister stood there, holding a candle and clad only in her nightgown. Her long red hair hung down to the middle of her back, and her brown bore the look of exhaustion.

"Hey," he whispered, "What are you doing out of bed?"

"I can't sleep."

He stepped to the side to let her in, and sat down next to her on his bed.

"Why can't you sleep?" He asked her, inwardly hoping she would leave soon.

"Isaac kicks in his sleep sometimes, and it keeps me up."

Felix laughed. Almost as soon as they had returned back to Vale, Jenna and Isaac had hooked up, and within a month's time, had stood at the altar together.

"What are you doing up?"

Felix shrugged, "just doing some thinking."

Jenna cocked her head to the side and frowned at him, "Felix, you worry me sometimes, you know that?"

It was Felix's turn to frown, "How so?"

"Ever since we got back, you've been quiet and moody, and other than when you're helping with the rebuild, you're off on your own, taking these long 'walks' that sometimes last days. What's going on?"

"It's nothing Jenna, I've just been doing some scouting for a good place to build a forge. One that will last in case another storm comes," he lied glibly.

"I have never seen you give so much as a second glance at smithery."

Felix knew that she didn't believe him, but he continued with the lie anyways, "I never had to. Now go to bed, it's late."

With a look that clearly stated she didn't believe him, she got off of his bed and walked out of the room, he waited until he heard her door close before he continued packing. He paused, however, when he found his old mask. It was made of wood, with green and brown paint on it. In reality, it was a simple mask, with two holes cut for the eyes and a hole for the mouth. He didn't know why, but he carefully placed it in the bag he was packing. As quietly as possible, he threw the bag over his shoulder and carried his sword and boots downstairs. Lightly, he twisted the latch in the door and opened, and quietly shut it behind him. Fearing he may have awoken someone, he quickly pulled on his boots and buckled them, threw the bag over his shoulder and, with sword in hand, sprinted off into the night.

It wasn't until he was atop a grassy hill that overlooked his hometown that he stopped, panting slightly from the heavy load in his bag.

He looked behind him at the town sprawled on a large grassy plain. At the northernmost area sat his house and the houses of his comrades. He wrapped his belt around his waist and clipped his sword on his lower back. With one last, long, look at his home, he turned and began heading westward.

The days passed by him with little event. The number of monsters had steadily decreased with the unleashing of Alchemy on the world. His Djinn afforded him little company, and he only used them on occasion to keep himself protected while he slept, or get him food. He was surprised when he topped the last mountain and found himself on the top of a large cliff that led down to the ocean. He stopped and stared out at the ocean, for the first time taking in the beauty of it.

"Funny, I didn't recognize beauty even though it stared me in the face," he started slightly at this, realizing how he wasn't talking about the ocean. He shook his head to clear his thoughts and began walking again; hoping that he could find a place to shield the noise created from using the Teleport Lapis.

Psynergy was strange like that, it was akin to firing a gun, in terms of use. Only adepts could 'hear' it being used, but when it was, they knew it. It became problematic for him and his friends, for when they were exploring a dungeon or lighthouse, the sound of them using Psynergy would attract monsters. The reason why he didn't use the Lapis immediately after he exited the town was that it would have awoken every adept in the town, and they would have had him before he could have built up enough energy to use it. So, while he understood that traveling for days and reaching the coast was overkill, he wasn't sure how far the sound of him activating the lapis would carry.

After about an hour of searching, he found a nice deep alcove in the cliff wall, and pressed himself tightly against the wall. Clutching the lapis in one hand, he closed his eyes and concentrated, drawing on the power of Venus beneath him. Beads of sweat appeared on his forehead as he concentrated. Using Venus to power a Jupiter-based item was difficult, as neither element mixed well. Eventually, when he felt his power reach its peak, he concentrated on the Mars Lighthouse, and the frozen wastelands just south of it.

"Prox," he whispered, and released his energy, and himself. He felt himself be painlessly pulled apart, and moments later, pieced back together in a white wasteland. He dropped to his knees, panting.

"I need to exercise more," he gasped, clenching his eyes shut as the world spun. He felt a familiar, but different presence above him. He glanced up and saw that he was at the base of the Mars Lighthouse. He felt comforted by the presence of Mars, as the small part of him that was Mars and not Venus grow slightly at the presence of its master. He stood quickly and glanced behind him, and smiled when he saw that the rift was indeed healing itself. Instead of the lighthouse sitting just on the brink, there was about three miles of land stretching behind it.

It was evening of the third day when Karst finally forced herself out of bed. The sun was starting to sink in the south-western sky, turning it multiple shades of pink. She disrobed, dropping her clothes onto the floor in a pile. Shivering slightly at the cold that had invaded the house, she padded to the room next door, where a small tub sat with a faucet at the top. She grabbed the robe hanging from a hook near the door and wrapped it around her body, trying to stave off the cold while she filled the tub with water. She carefully placed a few small pieces of wood under the tub for lighting when the still semi-frozen water filled the tub.

When the water was properly heated and steaming, she slowly lowered herself into the water, letting out a small sigh as she relaxed. She reached over and grabbed a bar of soap, and started running it over her body. Baths weren't common in the north, especially during the winter months because any water pipelines they had froze in mid-fall. So, when she was finished washing herself, the water was much darker and less clear. She stood up and reached for her robe, but as she stepped out to grab it, the door swung open, and there stood Agatio.

She stood there motionless for a moment, unable to move due to shock. He moved first, covering his eyes and trying to apologize. "Wait, Karst, I didn't mean to wal-," she cut him off with a scream of rage and horror, and promptly slammed the door in his face.

"Get out!" she yelled, slamming a palm against the door.

"Wait, let me explain," she heard through the door, "I didn't mean to. I didn't even know you were in there."

"Just get out!" She screamed, punching the door. She heard a series of quick hurried steps down the hall, and the front door slamming. Sighing, she pulled the plug on the tub, watching as the now lukewarm water swirled down the drain.

"Goddammit," she muttered, wrapping the robe around her body and walking back to her room. She stopped when she saw a scarf hanging from her door, one that was made of thick, brown wool. She pulled it off of the latch, and sat down on her bed. She stared at it, rubbing the fabric between her fingers. A soft knock alerted her to the presence of someone else. She kept her eyes on the scarf however, and acknowledged him.

"It was his, wasn't it."

"Yeah," he said, taking a tentative step into the room, "My mum just found it in an old storage box." When she didn't reply, he took another few steps into the room, and sat down on the bed next to her. "You miss him, don't you."

"No," she stated flatly, "Why would I miss him? He was only here for a short time, and even then we were always fighting."

He chuckled, and she looked over at him with a questioning look on her face. "What's so funny?" she demanded, her temper rising.

"My mum thinks differently."

"I don't love him," she said firmly, trying to convince more herself than her friend, "And if all you came for was to bring me a useless memento to remind me of his stay here then you made a mistake, because I don't care." She stood up after that, grabbed her clothes and armor, then moved to the room across the hall to change. As she pulled her chainmail over her head, his voice came from beside the door.

"Karst... I'm worried about you. I can't make you talk about it so, if you ever need me, you know where I am."

She stood there motionless as his footsteps faded down the hall. She waited until she heard the door close before she crumpled to the ground, the scarf clutched tightly in her fist as tears ran down her cheeks.

"Dammit," she muttered again, clenching her eyes shut to stop the flow of tears, "Why do you do this to me? Why won't you come back and answer me! You promised!"

"*Karst, I know you can't hear me, but..." Karst could barely make out his words, he seemed so far away, she was vaguely aware of his presence next to her.*

"*Don't die." He seemed even further away, and Karst couldn't feel him next to her.*

"*Don't die, I'll be back for you, I promise."*

Anger and frustration coursed through her, building up until she found herself outside in full battle gear, with scythe in hand.

Karst stood at her doorway and watched as the sun set, the pink and purple skies turning the un melted snow around her a deep shade of blue.

She closed her door behind her, locked it, and then headed south, passing around the outskirts of Prox, trying to avoid contact with its inhabitants as much as possible.

She made it to the small harbor that had been rapidly expanding in the past 18 months, snuck past the guard, and climbed aboard her ship. She pulled out the black orb that she had kept in her travel bag since the end of her journey and unlocked the cabin door with it. As she entered the ship, she 'heard' the distinctive noise of someone using Psynergy. Judging from the amount of noise it made, it must have been a large spell.

Probably Agatio, she thought to herself as she climbed below decks, *blowing something up in his mother's kitchen.*

She stood in front of the pedestal that was supposed to house the orb she held in her hand.

"I hope you're ready," she said, clutching the orb till her knuckles turned white, "because I've got some questions, and you better have some damn good answers."

I know it was a little short, not as long as I had hoped, but definitely longer than the previous chapter, right? Also, revised!

Please R&R

Chapter 3: Getting Lost

A/N: Well I finally finished this chapter, after watching it sit for a few months on my desktop. I'm relatively pleased with how it turned out.

Disclaimer: I don't own GS, or any characters associated with GS.

I need feedback like I need sunlight. Drop me a line, you know you want to.

Chapter 3: Getting Lost

The crisp wind of the sea bit at her chapped face as she navigated amongst the icebergs that littered the northern waters. Behind her, the lights of Prox shrank rapidly, leaving nothing but dark blue in its place. She watched as the sun sunk lower in the sky, threatening to make it too dark to navigate properly. Expertly spinning the wheel in her hand, she arced the ship to avoid a particularly large iceberg.

"Just a little further sun," she muttered, "don't fail me now."

The sun sank lower in the sky, now half of the sphere was hidden by the horizon. Karst cursed as a small floating chunk of ice ran into the ship, rocking it sharply. "Come on damnit! I am not stopping here!"

Eventually, after a few more agonizing minutes of half-blind steering, she saw an opening in the ice, and clear seas ahead of it. With a rare smile, she set a course to the south, wanting to land to get some supplies before really taking off. Karst tied off the rudder so she could sit at the bow. She closed her eyes as she walked forward, her hand against the

rail for guidance, and let the breeze play across her face. She sat at the bow and watched as the last little bit of sun sank below the horizon, closing her eyes as darkness enveloped the world around her. Eventually, though she had just gotten out of bed a few hours before, she fell asleep, trusting the goddess of Mercury to watch over her.

Felix walked into Prox in the late afternoon, blue and shivering. In his haste he had forgotten to pack his heavy clothes, and despite the multiple layers he was wearing he was still very cold. He looked around, and found that in the time he had been gone Prox had grown. There were a couple more businesses near the inn, and a number of houses had popped up, displaying how much the small town in the middle of nowhere had grown.

Felix headed straight for the inn, hoping to warm up and find some direction. But right as he opened the door, he ran into someone with short, white hair, and dark blue skin.

With a grunt, he bounced off of the thick Proxian and landed in the half-melted snow, which succeeded in making him even colder. He stood up quickly, hoping to apologize when he saw who it was he had run into.

"A-Agatio," he spluttered, completely surprised.

"You," Agatio said harshly, his eyes narrowing, "you pick now, of all times to come back?"

Felix grimaced, feeling the sting of Agatio's words. But before he could reply Agatio's fist connected with his face and he found himself in the snow again.

"I don't know why you're here Felix, but do Prox a favor, and go home." With that, he closed the door and Felix was left

sitting in the remaining slush from the winter. Sighing, Felix stood up and turned around; figuring that the best place to look for Karst was where her old house was. He smiled when he saw that it was still standing, and that a faint trickle of smoke was coming out of the chimney. Shivering as a slight breeze passed through his wet clothes, Felix quickened his pace to the doorstep. Felix tapped lightly at the door, and was surprised when it swung open with a creak.

"Karst?" He called out hesitantly. He took a small step inside, not wanting to enter her home uninvited. "Karst?" he called out again, louder this time. He walked to the end of the hall, and stopped at the room she normally slept in. A soft knock opened the door slightly, and he was able to peer inside, only to find it empty. On the floor, he saw an old woolen scarf, and recognized it as his. He picked it up, smiling as the touch of the wool brought back memories of growing up in Prox.

"She left," Agatio's voice came from the doorway. Felix tensed and slowly turned around, his hand slipping inside his cloak pocket and grasping the Teleport Lapis.

"Left?"

"She took our old ship, and left, to Mars knows where. Now," Agatio took a step into the room, and Felix noted he had his sword strapped to his belt, "what are you doing here?"

Felix took a step back, his hand up in a defensive gesture, "I just came because I wanted to see her."

"See her?" Agatio spat, taking another step into the room, "Six seasons Felix. SIX SEASONS!" he roared, suddenly filled with fury. The temperature in the room skyrocketed and Agatio suddenly found his blade in his hand. "Six seasons," he repeated, his voice shaking with rage, "she sat here and

waited for you, hoping you would come back. Six seasons we both waited for you, wanting answers."

"Answers?" Felix asked, frowning, "answers to what?"

"Like why you betrayed us atop Jupiter Lighthouse, and the Venus lighthouse, for starters," Agatio took another step into the room, and Felix felt sweat start to bead on his forehead, "You were our best friend Felix, and you stabbed us in the back. Now draw your sword, I'm finishing what we started at the Jupiter Lighthouse."

"I betrayed you?" Felix asked, when Agatio gestured with his sword that Felix should draw his, Felix replied with an adamant no, "I'm not going to fight you again Agatio."

Anywhere but here, anywhere but here, He thought as Agatio began slowly walking towards Felix, his sword held high. He quickly summoned the energy to teleport, and as Agatio dove forward, Felix felt himself dissolving, being picked apart to be put back together somewhere else.

The world rematerialized around him, but he knew that it wasn't Vale even before he had a clear view of everything. Seagulls soared above him, squawking and circling, looking for food. Looking around, Felix noticed that he was in an area of Weyard that he'd never been to before. The sky had darkened, so he had no indicator of what side of the earth he was on, or in which direction he was facing.

"Well, that's the last time I ever teleport without a clear idea of where I'm going."

Sighing, Felix set about gathering wood for a fire. He would've teleported again, but not knowing where one was when they teleported was just as dangerous as not having a clear vision of their location. Teleporting required that you

knew what direction you needed to travel in, and roughly, how far.

Fortunately Felix had teleported right outside a forest, so finding firewood was a simple task. After a few minutes, he had a small fire going, keeping him warm. "You left Karst, was it because you saw me arrive? Did you run from me?" he mused, putting his hand on his chin.

Felix sighed and wrapped his cloak tighter about his body "Why couldn't I teleport myself somewhere tropical?" He asked no one in particular. He laid down, and had Granite set it's shield over his body for protection.

That morning...

"Master! Master wake up!" Felix was shaken awake by a pair of tiny hands, and accompanied by a small, tinny voice.

"Nngh, what is it Echo?" Felix sat up, breaking the shield around him.

"There's a ship out in the water!" Echo said, pointing excitedly with one of it's stubby arms. Felix shaded his eyes and peered out into the water.

"So there is," he said, finally spotting the tiny black dot on the horizon, "I wonder what they're doing out here." At that, Felix realized that he didn't know where 'out here' was.

"By Mars," he swore, "I really screwed myself this time." He stood up, shaking off his cloak and placing it back in his bag. He wrapped his sword belt around his waist, and with a quick instruction to Echo to guard his gear, he set off into the woods, hoping that he could figure out where he was.

Felix carefully picked his way through the dense forest, trying to make as little sound as possible to avoid any of the beasts that may have been roaming nearby. In the distance, through a small clearing in the branches of the large trees, he could see a hill, with what looked to be a clearing on top of it.

"If I can get up there," he said, "I might be able to make out where I am." As he neared it however, he found that it was much steeper than it looked from a distance.

"Oh well," he said, cracking his knuckles, "Climbing is nothing new to me." Using his powers and his connection with the earth as a Venus adept, he was able to easily climb up, knowing which handholds would stay and which were compromised. After about an hour, Felix had reached the summit. Looking back, he saw the small beach he had landed on, and he could make out the shape of the ship that Echo had spotted. From the looks of it, it looked like it hadn't moved from when he saw it on the beach. *Who's in that?* He wondered, before turning around and gasping.

In front of him stretched Gaia falls, only a quarter mile from his current position. "Where did this island come from?" He mused aloud, he was pretty sure that he'd sailed up and down the entire accessible coast of the falls in his adventure, and had never seen an island like this. "Is the world remaking itself as it was? Islands and all? Kraden would love to see this."

Before Felix could continue to ponder the effects of Alchemy's release upon the world, a slight rumbling started in the ground, then grew to a deafening crescendo. Bucking violently, the ground caused Felix to lose his balance and fall, tumbling and sliding down the hill towards Gaia Falls.

Time seemed to slow as the never-ending cliff drew nearer and nearer, and Felix felt a slight panic grow inside of him as a memory from his days in Prox jumped to his mind.

"*Serik!" Felix yelled, though he knew it was futile, any noise he made was immediately whipped into the wind, and dispersed. A tug on the rope tied around his waist signaled him that he had been drifting to the left of his partner. Another tug told him to regroup.*

"*Any sign of him?" His partner asked as he came within view.*

"*Sorry Karst, finding him in this blizzard is going to be impossible. We can't see five feet in front of us!"*

Karst shook her head, which was almost imperceptible underneath all of the layers she and Felix were wearing. "We can't Felix! Think of his mother!"

Felix felt a pang of guilt at her words.

"*Serik!" She yelled, brushing snow off of the scarf wrapped around her head.*

"*Karst!" Felix yelled, "We've been heading in this direction for hours, if we aren't careful we'll run into the rift and not know it!"*

As if the fates were mocking them, they did just that.

"*Woah!" Felix reached out and grabbed Karst by her shoulder and hauled her back. Karst shrugged his arm off and dashed to the edge, sliding to a stop.*

"*Serik!" She screamed, fear and panic filling her voice.*

Felix's eyes widened as he realized Serik was hanging onto the edge of the cliff, his legs dangling off in a sea of nothingness. Thinking quickly, he pushed Karst to the side and dove to the ground, latching onto Serik's wrist as it began to slip.

"*Serik! Don't let go!" Felix roared over the whipping winds. Fear clearly showed in the Proxians eyes, and he clutched desperately at Felix's hands. Ice covered Serik's entire body, and the Proxians normally pink skin was taking on a very distinct blue color.*

"*Karst!" Felix yelled over his shoulder, "Pull us up!"*

A loud rumbling filled his ears and Felix suddenly felt the sensation that he was floating. He looked down and saw that the earth and snow he had been laying on had crumbled and fallen away, sinking into the never ending abyss that stretched beneath him. The rope played out behind him, before snapping taut and roughly jerking his body around.

"*Serik!" Felix yelled as his grip started to slip on Felix's gloved fingers. Felix reached down with his other arm and wrapped his fingers around Serik's wrist. "Karst pull us up!"*

"*I can't!" Felix faintly heard. It sounded like Karst was miles away from him. Risking a glance backwards, Felix saw that she was barely supporting their combined weight.*

"*Felix," Serik said, pulling himself up so that he was talking into his ear, "It's too late for me, just save yourself, alright?"*

"*Don't be a hero!" Felix roared, gripping Serik's wrists tighter.*

Serik laughed and shook his head. Felix interlocked his knuckles to make his grip as strong as a vice and nearly unbreakable, but Serik just reached up, and with a smile on his face, undid the buckle keeping his glove attached to his hand.

Felix scrabbled at the steep hill as the cliff-side rushed up to meet him. Realizing it was futile, he accessed his Psynergy, and summoned a spire out of the ground. He wrapped his arm around it as he slid by and sighed with relief as he stopped. Then quickly pulled himself back up as he felt his legs dangling over the edge.

"*What's it like?" Karst asked him, sitting in front of the fireplace in the inn wrapped in a thick woolen blanket. Felix was next to her, similarly wrapped.*

"*It's.. terrible," he replied, sipping at the warm tea in his hands, "You feel... cut off from the world, your element, everything. It's as if everything around you is dead. Your senses are useless. It all goes numb. All you can think about is that you'll spend eternity falling through nothingness, with no hope in sight."*

Once Felix was certain that the ground was not going to continue shaking, he headed down the hill, back to the beach.

"Stupid stupid stupid!" Karst exclaimed as she stood at the map table in her ship's cabin. Too late had she remembered that the lighting of the Venus lighthouse had re-shaped some of the continents. Which prevented her from landing on the beach that her sister landed on. Of course, the beach that would've given her a straight route over a shorter

stretch of mountains was a beach she had passed at some point two days ago.

She had spent a full day sailing south, right between Angara and Hesperia. However a strong current had taken hold of her ship, and in the middle of the night, brought her west and forced her to loop around the Attekan continent. She considered stopping at a small island she had seen that morning, thinking there might have been food, but her determination to get to him as fast as possible won over. Now she sat at the southern tip of Gondowa, debating whether to sail back the way she had come or continue on and find a beach nearby.

A/N: So.. what'd ya think? I know it's been a really long time since I updated, but I promise I'm working hard on it!

Chapter 4: Memories, and a Near Miss

Chapter 4: Memories, and a Near Miss

"Well Echo, I guess this means we are as far west as we can go."

"How do you know, Master?" Echo squeaked, hovering next to Felix on the beach.

"The sun rises in the east and sets in the west. The sun is now setting on the far side of that hill, where Gaia falls is. That's the western side of Gaia falls."

"Oh," Echo said, bobbing in what Felix assumed to be a nod. "So how will we get back?"

Felix scratched the stubble that was growing on his chin and pulled the Lapis out of his pocket, "Well we can't wait here. We've sat here for a few days now and no ships have appeared, so we'll have to just guess and hope we don't land in the middle of the ocean or in a volcano."

It hadn't occurred to Karst the gamble she was taking when she decided to go west.

"Of course they'd look for me," she muttered as she watched another Proxian ship go by, "I stole one of their ships." She had been fortunate enough to evade the other ships that had sailed past by anchoring in a small alcove along the Gondowan coast.

"I should've gone east, damnit!" She swore, climbing down from the dragonhead at the bow of the ship. "Too hasty," she muttered, cringing as her sister's words of advice echoed in her head.

"*Why can't I go with you?" Karst whined, standing at the pier in front of her sister.*

"*Karst, don't be so hasty to throw your youth away to be a warrior. Haste is what gets warriors killed. You'll be ready soon enough."*

"*Yes Menardi," Karst sighed.*

"*I love you little sister, stay safe." With a quick kiss on the forehead, Menardi stepped back to where Felix and Saturos were standing. She glanced back at Karst, who only stuck her tongue out at her in response.*

Karst sighed as she activated the lever that would raise the anchor.

Haste is what gets warriors killed…

"I know Menardi," Karst said as she walked back to the wheel of the ship, "you're probably the one who made this south running current too, just to mock me."

It had been two days since Karst decided to go west, and she hadn't covered half the distance north. Even with her magically powered ship, that could outrun any ship on the seas, minus that Lemurian's winged ship, the going was agonizingly slow. Karst activated the lever that would pull the anchor up on the ship, and made her way back to the wheel to steer herself out of the alcove.

Karst tied off the rudder as she got the ship pointed north, and began walking the length of the ship on both sides, lighting lanterns that hung along a thick rope around the cabin and stretched to the head of the dragon. The lights would attract monsters once the sun set, but monsters were easy to deal with, being rammed in the middle of the night by another ship was not.

Karst let out a small sigh as she contemplated what would happen when she arrived in Vale. Her eyes widened as she realized one of the reasons that he may not have returned.

Karst! You idiot! Of course he's probably married! Why else would he have broken his promise?

Karst pounded the rail of the ship, and suddenly found herself pacing .

"Of course Karst, what were you thinking? He promised he'd return, he never said that would take your hand or anything!" She viciously kicked at the railing, and felt some small satisfaction as one of the supports splintered under the force of the blow. Jealousy coursed through her, making her even angrier.

"How could I have been so stupid, to think expect he really felt anything for me? How could I have even thought he *wouldn't* be married? He's a hero! Valean women are probably throwing themselves at him!"

A low growl at her back interrupted her thoughts, and she turned around to find a small ocean dragon sitting atop the deck. Picking up her scythe where it sat near the wheel, Karst faced the beast.

"You picked a really bad time," she muttered, to which the beast only roared in reply.

"Eager to die?" Karst asked, feeling rock hard scales native to her species form on her shoulder. With another roar, the dragon charged towards her, with one claw outstretched. Karst side-stepped and swung her scythe down, slicing into the beasts arm. With a sharp yank, Karst watched in satisfaction as the blade ripped apart the flesh and tendons in its arm, and it dropped limply to the deck. The beast writhed in agony as Karst casually kicked the severed limb over the edge of the ship. Frothing at the mouth, the dragon reared to its full height, and dove at her.

With an almost impassive motion, Karst swung her scythe up and into the head of the dragon. She completed the swing until the beast's momentum was carrying it over her shoulder and off the deck of the ship.

Karst surveyed the gore that now covered the ship. Blood, it seemed, was everywhere, and bits of gore stuck to her blade.

Wordlessly, she went into the cabin and pulled out a bucket of water. Undressing, she hung her blood stained clothes on a hook, and sat on a stool in the middle of the room, using a sponge to wash herself and her blade. Vaguely, in the back of her mind, she remembered that the last time she had done this on a ship, was right after Jupiter Lighthouse.

"*This is no time for petty grudges!"*

"*Alex! You.."*

"*You don't consider me a friend? I don't care."*

"*Alex what are you doing here?" She demanded, wiping away blood on her brow that threatened to drip into her eyes. "I'm a little busy."*

"*Karst, I thought you said you would aid Felix in his quest."*

"*He betrayed us! And treason deserves death!"*

"*He betrayed you?" Alex stepped up the stairs to the aerie, "I fail to see how he did that. The lighthouse is lit, is it not? If anything, I think you did the betraying, and from the looks of it, killing."*

Karst glanced around nervously. She hadn't killed any of them, had she? No, they were still breathing, albeit a bit labored. She was about to reply with a scathing remark to Alex, but Kraden's voice came from below "What's keeping Felix and the others?

"*There's no time to talk!" Alex hissed*

"*Then what should we do?" Karst asked*

"*Take the other elevator, it should be fully operational now that the beacon is lit."*

"*We have no choice Karst," Agatio said, "Let's go."*

"*Good!" Alex exclaimed, "You're listening to reason! Now follow me!"*

Karst and Agatio followed Alex, the realization of what they had done sinking in. Once they were back on their ship, Agatio knocked on Karsts door.

"*What is it?"*

Agatio slumped against the other side of the door, "Do you really think we just killed our only friend?"

"*I-I don't know Agatio."*

Agatio got up and left, and once Karst was sure he was gone, she started scrubbing herself. She watched in horror as the bucket of clear water slowly turned a dark, murky brown.

"*How could someone bleed this much, and still live?*"

They can't. *She told herself, continuing to scrub.* He's dead, you killed him.

Karst fought to keep the memory out of her head, as feelings she tried to hide crept to the surface.

"He didn't come back because he hates me. He very well should, for what I did." She said quietly, before flinging the sponge across the room and kicking the bucket over. The pale red water flowed across the room, staining the wood a dark color. Sighing in frustration, Karst grabbed a fresh set of clothes and yanked them on before stepping out onto the deck. Grabbing a bucket that hung on a line, Karst threw it over the edge and hauled it back up, before gingerly placing it on the deck. Grabbing a mop, she began the task of scrubbing all of the blood out of the wood on the deck, and eventually, in the cabin.

Felix sighed as the sun began to set. "Well Echo," he said, "I guess it's time."

Echo nodded and set himself to Felix, who took out the Lapis, summoned his energy, made a silent prayer to Venus, and whispered, "Vale."

Felix felt the familiar feeling of being picked apart, and watched as the world around him slowly dissolved, only to reform into blackness. The sound of the ocean near him instantly alerted him to the fact that he wasn't near Vale,

and he had either overshot, or stranded himself on another island.

"By Venus," he swore, "At this rate, I'll be an uncle before I get home."

Moving to the ocean, he saw that he was near a small alcove, somewhere.

Felix un-slung his pack and sat down, sighing in defeat.

"What am I doing?" he asked, feeling whatever determination he had left die in his heart. He punched the ground in frustration and frowned as it rumbled in response.

She probably hates me, like Agatio does.

Feeling numb from his realization, Felix stood and walked towards the sound of the ocean.

Felix stopped walking as he reached the tip of the alcove that formed the entrance. He stared out at the black waters, nearly invisible save for the sliver of moon giving off light above his head. "Do you hate me Karst?"

He continued to stand there for the next several minutes, watching the waves crash upon the beach that stretched before him.

"*I hate you Felix!" Karst yelled, punching Felix in the jaw as he tried to heal her. Felix fell back into the snow, his hand immediately moving to block her next swing.*

"*Karst, stop it." Off to the side, Saturos picked up their training weapons and wiped the blood off. Despite the fact that they were made of wood, both Felix and Karst somehow*

always managed to get their blood smeared all over each others' weapons. "He's only trying to help you."

"*I. Don't. Need. Help. From. Some. Wimpy. Little. Mud-boy." She said, enunciating each word with a swing at Felix. In truth, he was a lot bigger than she was now, nearly a full head taller, but that only infuriated her even more.*

"*I'm only healing you so I can kick your ass again, fire-crotch." He stated, smiling as she struggled to stand on her sprained ankle. Her anger built as she realized that over the course of one year, she had gone from routinely beating him at everything they did, to having her ass handed to her each time they met, with the bruises and injuries becoming worse and worse. In response to his comment, she stuck her middle finger up at him, but quickly regretted it as soon as her older sister's screech filled the air.*

"***Karst!***" *Karst felt her blood chill as the screech echoed around the open tundra. She quickly tried to hide her rude gesture but it was no good. "Come here so I can break that finger off!"*

Karst glanced as she heard Felix chuckle, and directed a blast of fire in his direction. She watched in satisfaction as he dropped to the ground, trying to douse the flames in the snow. Now thoroughly soaked, and standing in an ankle deep puddle, Felix glared at her, and she stuck her tongue out at him.

Felix gave a slight grimace as he thought back to his early days in Prox. In truth, he had hated her for their first two years together, and both of them would spend days trying to piss the other off. Or, in some cases, kill the other.

"It's funny Karst," he said, talking to himself, "You said you were the only one allowed to kill me, and you came so close

to succeeding," he pulled his glove off and rolled up his sleeve and inspected the long jagged scar that ran all the way up to his elbow. Mia's hasty healing after the fight at the Jupiter Aerie was a bit messy, and as such the flesh had hardened into a scar, instead of sealing the wound as if it had never happened.

Unrolling his sleeve and replacing his glove, he walked back to his pack with the intent of continuing on his journey home.

His Djinni awoke with a start when he threw the pack over his shoulder, and as Djinni are small creatures and easily frightened, Felix found himself hounded and pounced upon by a small horde of baseball sized, brown beasts.

"Relax!" He yelled, causing them all to stop at once, "It's just me!" setting his pack back down, he opened the flap and invited them back in. Hoisting it again on his shoulder, he started walking along the coastline.

"Master? Where are we going?" Echo squeaked out of his pack.

"Along this coast Echo, we're bound to run into civilization, or something familiar at some point."

"You mean we still don't know where we are?"

Felix sighed, "Not in the slightest Echo."

A chorus of whine's came from his pack, and Felix rubbed his temple. The Djinni were good company at times, and were great allies in battle, but they also had the personality of a four year old.

"What do you think Jenna's going to do when we get back?"

Felix paused, he hadn't thought about the reaction he would receive when he got home. "Jenna's going to roast me alive, plain and simple."

"Why?"

"Because it's Jenna Echo, and that's her solution to everything."

And another chapter down. It's interesting how quickly these chapters come when you sit down and have the document in front of your face, as opposed to just waiting for inspiration to hit you.

Also, I know that Agatio's character flip-flops a little bit. But I don't think he's the brainless brute they make him out to be in GS:TLA, so I'm trying to give him a little more depth.

Chapter 5: Arriving in 5, 4

Well, here's another chapter!

Also, I'm desperately looking for a beta, I absolutely hate putting out work that has mistakes in it. Hence why chapter 3 took so long to be put up. The last few betas I started with ended up not delivering. If you're up to the task, send me a message.

I need feedback like I need sunlight, drop me a line, you know you want to.

Chapter 5: Arriving in 5… 4…

"Any luck?" Jenna asked as Isaac came inside. She got up off the couch she had been laying on and helped Isaac out of his soaked clothes. It had been raining a steady downpour for the past two days, and showed no signs of letting up.

"Jenna, I'm pretty sure he's gone until he wants to come back. The Lapis is gone, and it's been a week and a half." Isaac snapped. He immediately regretted his words however, as he saw his wife's face fall, and she wordlessly hung his cloak on the hook near the door.

"Jenna, I-" Isaac started, but his wife cut him off.

"Go change Isaac," she said, faking a smile, "I'll heat some soup for you." With that, she walked off into the kitchen, leaving Isaac standing there in his dripping clothes. Sighing in defeat, he walked upstairs to the room he shared with his wife, and began undressing.

"Stupid Felix..." Isaac muttered, "Have to run off in the beginning of winter, make us search in the bad weather.." Peeling his shirt and trousers off, Isaac carefully hung them on the bathtub to dry, and reached for a towel. "So help me, if he comes back, I'll kill him."

"Isaac!" Jenna's sharp voice echoed up from the kitchen. Cringing at her tone, Isaac pulled on a pair of clean clothes and walked downstairs.

"Jenna, I'm sorry about what I said, I'm sure Fe-" Again Isaac was cut off, as Jenna directed him to the table, where a large steaming bowl of soup sat. Sitting down, Isaac quietly spooned a small portion into his mouth, and risked a glance at his wife. She was sitting at the other end, with an unreadable expression on her face.

"Isaac?"She asked quietly. Isaac froze, when Jenna got quiet like this, one of two things was about to happen, either he was going to be on the receiving end of Jenna's Serpent Fume, or she was about to cry.

Both were situations that he wanted to avoid.

"Do you think Felix will come back?" Isaac inwardly breathed a sigh of relief, he at least was going to survive the night. But before he could reply, there was a large, resounding knock at the front door.

Karst allowed herself a smile as Loho came into view. At the same time, she felt a certain amount of apprehension.

What if he's angry? You idiot, of course he's angry. They're all probably angry.

Sighing, she spun the wheel and navigated the ship slowly into harbor. A short, stout man with a beard that reached past his waist grabbed the rope she tossed from the rail and expertly tied it to the cleat. Dropping another line, Karst gripped it with one gloved hand and slowly slid down it, landing lightly on the dock.

"It's twenny gold pieces a day ter harber yer ship here lass." The dwarven man told her. Karst fished around in her cloak and pulled out a sizeable bag with a drawstring top.

"Here's 500, that should pay for my stay and anything extra." The dwarf's eyes widened considerably at the heft of the bag, and quickly led her into the small mining town.

"Where're ye headed lass?" He asked, carefully tying the bag to his belt.

"Vale," she replied, looking at the signs on the storefronts, searching for the item shop.

"Ye best be leavin' tonight then lass, a storm be comin in, and it's a two day hike to Vale. Anything you need in particular?"

"Just enough food to get me there."

"That shop be down at the end of this path 'ere. Good travels to ye!" Karst nodded and stopped in the item shop, grabbing a small amount of food, then set off to the east, with the sun at her back. Ahead of her, in the dusk light, she could see a large formation of dark clouds.

"Shit," she swore, "these next two days are going to suck."

She was right, she woke up the next morning soaked through and through, the only dry spot being the ground

beneath her, but that was quickly soaked as well.

"I hate the rain," she muttered as she began walking along the steep muddy trail that led up the mountain that bordered Loho. Suddenly her feet slipped on a slick patch of mud and she found herself face first in the goop. "I wish I was a Venus adept," she muttered, picking herself up with a curse.

"*Come on fire-crotch, can't keep up?" Felix taunted her, some twenty feet above her on the mountain. It was spring and with spring in the north came a wave of melted snow and rain, which turned the surrounding mountains into a slick rock.*

"*Just because you're going with my sister and Saturos to Vale doesn't mean I won't hesitate to blast your ass off this mountain mud-boy."*

Felix ignored her and turned his attention to Saturos, who was managing to keep pace with Felix, "Watch out, that branch is rotten." Saturos quickly adjusted and instead grabbed a rock next to the branch, and hoisted himself up.

"*Karst! Hurry up!" Menardi yelled back to her, "I don't want to have to wait for you at the top of this mountain!"*

Karst grit her teeth and pulled herself up another couple of feet, before she heard something that sounded like Felix chuckling. "Come on Karst," he said in a low tone, so that only she and he could hear it, "Don't want to keep big sister waiting."

Suddenly alive with fury, Karst scrabbled up the rock until she was even with Felix, "Week's worth of insults says you don't beat me to the top."

Felix cracked a grin, "You're on."

With sudden, renewed energy, Karst and Felix began racing each other to the top, passing Menardi in a matter of moments. As they reached the summit, Karst realized how foolish she had been, Felix was a full two arm lengths in front of her, and there was no room for her to get in front of him before he reached the top, when suddenly, he slipped.

Felix came sliding down the mountain past her, just as she made one final leap for the top. As he slid past Karst thought she saw a hint of a smile on his face.

Karst stood up and wiped the mud off of her face. She glared up at the peak of the mountain that was nearly enshrouded in clouds. "Hell with this," she muttered, and promptly stepped off the trail onto the rocky hill. After a few moments of adjusting her gear, she was off, climbing straight up the mountain.

"Master, won't you take a break?"

Felix sighed and sat down. He had been travelling north for two days now, and had guessed that he was on the western side of Gondowa, and that he was nearing Loho.

"I'm just delaying the inevitable..." he muttered, shaking his head.

"Inevita what?" Echo asked, crawling out of the pouch in Felix's pack.

"Inevitable Echo. Means that no matter what, it's going to happen," Felix replied.

"So, what's inevitable?"

Felix sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose, as if the thought of what was coming was giving him a headache. "The inevitability is that I'm going to eventually have to settle down… and get married, most likely to a girl from Vale."

"Is that bad?"

"Only when it's not what you want. Come on, we still have a lot more ground to cover."

Echo climbed back into Felix's pack, which he hoisted onto his back and began walking north again.

"Why do you have to get married master?"

"Because Echo," Felix said, pausing to readjust the pack on his back, "that's what's expected of men my age. We're supposed to get married, have a couple kids, and start a trade."

"Why don't you want to get married?"

Felix shook his head, "You wouldn't understand Echo. Let's leave it at that. We've only got maybe another day of travel, and then we can teleport from Loho to Vale."

Felix continued walking along the coast, stopping only to enjoy watching the sun rise over the mountains, and then grimacing as he saw large, black clouds heading his way.

"Is that rain master?"

"Yes Echo, I just hope it doesn't hit before we make it to Loho."

As luck would have it, they didn't. Felix guessed he was halfway there when he felt a few raindrops hit his head, and before he knew it, the rain was coming down in sheets, and he, ill prepared for nasty weather like this, was soaked to the bone.

"Damnit. This is just my luck."

Grumbling to himself the rest of the way, he managed to make it to Loho in the late afternoon, just as the cloudy sky was beginning to darken. Trudging through the muddy street of the mining town, Felix racked his memory as to where the inn was located, when a shout rang out.

"Oi! Boy, get in 'ere!" Felix turned and wiped water out of his face to see a stout man with a long beard waving at him from a lit doorway. Turning, Felix quickly jogged over to the doorway and pulled his hood back.

"Are yeh insane lad? Yeh'd freeze t'death out there!"

"I was actually looking for the inn," Felix replied, shaking the water out of his hair.

"Well yeh certainly found et! Where're ye headed lad?"

"Vale," Felix replied, "My hometown."

"Another trav'ler to Vale! We 'ad this prickly lookin' lass come 'ere las' night, headin' fer Vale." The innkeeper peered closely at Felix, then his eyes widened considerably, "Yeh… yeh're Felix! Onna tha heroes!"

Felix frowned, *Everywhere I go…* "Yeah, that's me."

"Well lad, ye can't be goin' out in that. Ye'd surely die!"

As Felix opened his mouth to protest, a large crackle of thunder shot down from the sky, making the two grown men jump in surprise.

"Perhaps you're right," Felix said, moving past the man and into the warmth of the inn. "How much is it per night?"

"Norm'ly it's fifty gold pieces, but fer a hero like you, this night's onna house." The man reached behind the counter and produced a key, which he placed into Felix's hands. "A lass'll be by teh give yeh some dry clothes ana towel."

Thanking the innkeeper, Felix sopped his way up the stairs and into his room, where he quickly peeled off most of his wet clothes and hung them over the bathtub. After a couple minutes, a timid knock came at the door, and Felix opened it to find a blushing girl a few years younger than him standing there with a tray of food and a towel over her shoulder.

"G-good ev-vening," she stammered, avoiding looking at Felix, "c-compliments of the h-house."

Felix gingerly took the tray and the towel, and placed them on the bed. "Is something the matter?" He asked, turning back to the door, only to find that the young girl was gone. Frowning, Felix closed the door, took the rest of his clothes off, and dried himself with the towel.

"Master?" Echo said, poking his head out of Felix's pack, "If you wanted to find Karst, why are we going back to Vale?"

"Because, it's likely she doesn't want to see me."

"Isn't Jenna going to be very mad?"

Felix draped his trousers over the edge of the bathtub along with the rest of his clothes and sat on the edge of the bed, "she's going to be furious with me."

"Then why go?"

Felix opened his mouth to speak, but stopped.

Why should I go? Am I really happy there? The thought crossed his mind so suddenly Felix had to double check that it was even his. He shook his head, stating out loud, "My family is there. That's where I belong."

Echo did his best impression of cocking his head to the side, and staring at Felix before returning to his pack. Felix walked to the head of the bed, climbed underneath the covers and promptly fell asleep.

So I apologize for the shortness of this chapter, and I absolutely hate the ending of it, but it's here. Chapter six will soon follow! R&R please!

Chapter 6: Town of Prejudice

"A/N: So college hasn't fully picked up yet (thank god) so I'm gonna try and pump out this chapter before it does.

So, without further ado...

Chapter 6: Town of Prejudice

Karst grumbled as she neared the town of Vale. It was still raining, and despite her best efforts to use her Psynergy to stay dry, she felt like she had been hit with a Deluge Psynergy. Steam rose off of her in columns, and sweat poured down her face from the exertion of keeping her body warm. Thunder struck occasionally, unnoticeable against the grey sky.

Still, she trudged on, the mud sucking at her boots, and the weight of her sopping pack weighing her down. Recalling from her memory the image of the map, Karst realized she was climbing the last hill before she reached Vale. As she neared the crest, she stepped in a slick patch of mud, and for the nth time on her trip, found herself face first in it. Karst glared as she slipped again as she struggled to stand up.

"Damn mud," she muttered as she pulled herself up the hill. Eventually, she reached the top, and set her eyes upon Vale. With grim determination, she readjusted her pack, and headed into town. She glanced around as she passed through the gate, and was surprised to see a number of half finished buildings, and no Mt. Aleph in sight.

"Is this even the right place?" she asked herself. She quickly sought out the largest building, thinking it to be the inn. As

she approached the door, she paused, feeling apprehensive. If this was indeed Vale, then she couldn't imagine the reception another Proxian would receive. However before she could back away from the door, it opened, and she found herself face-to-face with a giant of a man. Standing over six feet tall, with a broad frame, this man made the largest of warriors in Prox look like sticks in comparison.

"Welcome to Vale!" he boomed, "What can we do for you, traveler?" He asked.

Somewhat startled by the man, Karst managed "I need a room, and some information."

"Well come in, get out of the rain. We have plenty of both." The man stood to the side and gestured her inside.

People never reacted well to Proxians, even if they didn't have a reason to hate us. It's likely this town would burn me alive, given the chance. She thought, as another feeling of apprehension washed over her as she walked through the door.

"Where'd ye come from?" The man asked as he began rummaging through a drawer of keys.

"Prox," Karst said, pulling her hood back. Suddenly, the entire room fell deathly silent, and every pair of eyes was trained on her, who stared back defiantly.

I am not letting the mistakes of my sister hold me back. We did what we had to do.

"Why have you come? Here to finish the job?" One Valean yelled at her from the other side of the room. Karst felt her anger spike, and she fought the urge to incinerate the man with a fireball.

Destroying his hometown would NOT be a good start to asking forgiveness.

"Cale," the Valean who had previously helped her said, "Go inform the Mayor." A younger boy, who had been sitting behind the counter, stood and dashed out the door, giving Karst a wide birth. Karst felt her heart sink as he disappeared into the rain, as she knew soon the entire town would be looking for her.

"This isn't going to end well," she muttered as she turned to face the rapidly forming angry mob in the lobby of the inn.

Isaac opened the front door to find Garet standing there, looking grim.

"Garet," Isaac said, surprised, "What are you doing here?" He noticed the look on his face, and Isaac felt a weight settle in his chest, "This isn't a social visit, is it?"

"One of the townspeople just told me a Proxian entered the inn. "'Armed to the teeth,' as he put it."

Isaac frowned, "Was he able to identify who it was?" The three knew it was a useless, question, only two people would travel to Vale looking for a fight.

"He told me it was a woman with long, red hair."

Isaac glanced at Jenna, who only shook her head, "It has to be Karst, who else could it be?"

Isaac sighed and began walking towards the stairs, "Let me grab my gear Garet, I'll meet you outside."

Karst was now slowly backing away from the crowd, reaching behind herself to grab the door. The crowd slowly advanced

towards her, an insult emerging every few seconds.

"You bastards destroyed my home!"

"Have you people done enough to us?"

"I lost my husband because of that storm!"

Karst flinched with every insult that reached her ears. Suddenly, she felt herself up against the door, and she glared back at the mob as she fumbled with the latch. The mob pressed closer until they were only an arm's length away.

"You're a monster! You and your people deserve what they had coming!"

At that, Karst felt her temper flare beyond control, and before she knew it, her Scythe was in her left hand, and in her right was a fireball, which she used to blast the front door of the inn to pieces. The mob paused, unsure of whether to press forward against the woman who had just reduced a solid wood door into toothpicks, and now brandished a scythe in their direction.

"You bastards," she said, slowly pointing her scythe at each person, "You ignorant bast-"

"Karst!" A sharp voice rang out behind her. One she recognized. "Your fight is with me."

Felix sighed and rolled out of bed as the gray light streamed into his face through his window. He glanced outside to find that it was still raining, and thunder struck occasionally off in the distance.

"I guess now's as good of a time as any," he muttered, going into the bathroom and pulling on his slightly damp clothes. He walked up to his pack and lightly shook it. "Wake up guys, we're leaving."

With the energy of a small puppy hyped up on adrenaline, his Djinni exploded out of his pack and started excitedly bouncing around the room, chanting about going home. Felix sighed and picked up his cloak and threw it around his shoulders, and then hoisted his pack onto his back.

"Hop in, or I'm leaving without you," he said to the bouncy creatures. One by one, they climbed into his pack, still chattering excitedly.

Walking down the hall and stairs to the lobby, Felix paused to place a small pile of gold coins on the front desk with his room key sitting at the top.

"Leavin'?" Felix turned to find the man that had spoken with him last night leaning against the counter.

"I have to, I need to go home. I'm already late as it is, I wanted to be there by morning."

The man nodded, "Ah unnerstan'. Jus' know that yeh'll always have a free room at this inn."

Felix nodded his thanks and stepped outside. Hurriedly placing his hand on the Lapis, Felix hoped to teleport before he got soaked.

"Vale," he whispered, for what he hoped was the last time, and felt himself get picked apart, piece by piece.

Karst slowly turned around to find Isaac standing in the center of the town. Her rage flared as she saw her sister's

killer, and suddenly the temperature around her skyrocketed. She stepped forward, and the townspeople gawked as the spot where she had been standing was now charred black. Smoke poured from the doorframe as she walked past it, and, after a few moments, caught fire.

"Why have you come?" Isaac asked, moving into a ready stance.

Karst paused, why had she come? All that mattered now was avenging her sister. As she opened her mouth to reply, she remembered the last time she ever saw her sister, leaving with Saturos and Felix.

Felix?

She blinked and shook her head as she took another step forward, into the rain. She vaguely noticed the rain drops evaporating a few feet from her, and how the blade of her scythe was beginning to glow from the heat.

"I came to see Felix," she said, struggling to control her emotions, "where is he?" Smoke was now emitting from the grass at her feet as it rapidly dried.

"He's gone Karst. He left a week and a half ago."

Karst frowned, "Where?"

Isaac shook his head, "We don't know. He left without any notice."

Karst peered at Isaac through the rain and the bursts of steam. She shook her head, "You're lying! Felix would never leave his friends." *Except me,* she thought as a memory resurfaced in her mind.

"*Do you have to go?"*

Felix, Agatio, and Karst sat at the riverbank, watching as half-melted ice chunks floated past.

"*Do you not want me to?"*

Karst quickly got defensive, "Of course I don't, if you do, I'm only going to have Agatio to pick on, and that's no fun at all."

Felix chuckled and glanced at Karst, then sighed, "I have to. I need to see how my friends and my little sister are doing. I can't just leave them behind."

Karst sighed and rested her hands on her knees, "Awfully unfair of you, just up and leaving us."

Felix smiled, "I'll come back Karst, I promise."

"Karst?"

Karst shook her head again, snapping herself back into the present. She glanced behind her and saw that the doorframe of the inn was now fully engulfed in fire, and it looked like it was spreading. The rain did nothing to stop the fire, despite the heavy downpour.

"Where is he?" She asked, moving her scythe into a ready stance.

"I told you, he's not here Karst." Isaac said, frowning.

"I don't believe you," she said, slowly starting to circle Isaac. Off to the side, she noticed a tall, fiery haired man she recognized as Garet, and Jenna, Felix's younger sister.

"Leave Karst," Isaac said, drawing his sword "I don't want to fight you in the middle of my hometown."

Karst glared at Isaac, "You still owe me for my sister!"

"Your sister attacked us Karst!"

"Liar!" She yelled, fighting down the emotions that threatened to emerge, "She was trying to save my people, and you bastards killed her!"

"We didn't have a cho-" Isaac was cut off as Karst hurled a fireball at him. He raised his shield and deflected the attack into the ground, where it sizzled and disappeared.

"I'm not going to fight you Karst. Your sister got what she deserved."

Karst felt her rage boil over at his words, and the tears that were previously threatening to spill down her face disappeared in a puff of steam. A massive fireball appeared in her hand, and she glared at Isaac. "I'll kill you for that!" She yelled, the fireball increasing in size.

"Isaac!" Jenna screamed as Karst hurled the fireball at him. Isaac slammed his palm into the earth, and a large stone spire shot up, blocking the path of Karst's attack. It impacted the spire, and Isaac watched as the fire ball enveloped the spire, and then dissipated, leaving a small pond of molten lava in its place.

Karst followed behind the fireball, jumping high in the air and slashing downward at Isaac, who stumbled backwards, barely recovering before Karst was swinging at him again. Isaac rapidly gathered his Psynergy, and unleashed a tremor that caused Karst to lose her balance, which Isaac rapidly took advantage of. Karst found herself on the defensive,

parrying and dodging Isaac's swings and thrusts with little recovery time. Suddenly, Karst saw an opening in Isaac's attack, and viciously swung at his head. Isaac hopped back, but not before the tip of her scythe nicked his head, causing a small gash to form. Karst rapidly followed up with another attack, this time using the dull edge of her blade to hook Isaac behind the knee, and cause him to stumble forward and fall. Seizing the opportunity, Karst viciously swung downwards, intending to impale Isaac on the blade.

Isaac barely rolled out of the way in time, wincing as her blade left a deep cut in his forearm. Karst struggled to pull her blade out of the ground, but she had swung too hard, and it was stuck. Isaac seized the opportunity and stomped on the blade of the scythe, snapping it in half. Kicking the broken pieces away, Isaac attacked Karst with vigor.

Karst began dodging his attacks, while simultaneously drawing in her Psynergy for an attack. Jumping back from Isaac, Karst threw her hand out and yelled "Rising dragon!" But as her attack formed, Isaac jumped out of the way, and she missed. Before Karst could recover, Isaac charged her, and smashed the pommel of his sword into her stomach, and then rammed his shoulder into her face as she doubled over. Karst stumbled back, clutching at her face while simultaneously trying to force air back into her deflated lungs, when Isaac was upon her, slashing at her so rapidly Karst barely had time to dodge one swing before another was being directed at her.

Vaguely, she realized that both of them were beginning to tire. Isaac's swings started coming slower and slower, and she was finding it hard to force her screaming muscles to move with the energy necessary to avoid being cut in two. So exhausted and fixated on the fight, that neither noticed the rushing sound that always accompanied a large

Psynergy spell, nor did they notice that someone was teleporting into the center of the town, just a few feet away from them.

Felix smiled as Vale rematerialized around him. Only to frown as the sounds of battle reached his ears, originating from somewhere behind him.

"Garet!" He yelled, whirling around, "What'd I tell you ab-..." Felix trailed off as he saw who was fighting.

"Karst?" He asked, his jaw dropping open. Karst either didn't hear him, or ignored him, as she was sluggishly dodging swings and stabs from Isaac's sword.

Suddenly, Isaac scored a hit, and Karst staggered back and fell, clutching at the sword sticking into her abdomen. Isaac walked towards her, his hand glowing with Psynergy. Sweat mingled with blood and dripped from his brow. As he neared her, he glared down at Karst, who stared back, her face a mixture of pain and defiance.

For Felix, time seemed to slow as he saw Isaac's grip tighten in preparation for the attack. Before he knew what he was doing, he was running forward, covering the short distance between himself and the two combatants. He tackled Isaac to the ground, forcing him to dissipate his Psynergy.

"Felix!" Isaac exclaimed as Felix rolled off of him, "What the hell are you doing!"

Felix ignored Isaac and knelt down next to Karst, whose breathing had become labored. Before he could do anything, though, Isaac tackled Felix to the ground, pinning him.

"Answer me Felix!" Isaac yelled, pinning Felix to the ground.

"Get off Isaac," Felix growled. When Isaac didn't respond, Felix bucked him off, and stood back up. Isaac quickly followed and placed a firm hand on Felix's shoulder. Felix glanced at Karst, who was now laying in a rather large pool of blood.

"Felix, I'm not going to as-" Isaac was cut off as Felix's fist connected with his face. Isaac stumbled backwards and fell, clutching at his bleeding face. Felix quickly turned and walked to where Karst was laying.

"Karst?" Felix asked, picking her head up into his lap.

"Felix?" She asked quietly before coughing up blood, which splattered onto Felix's clothes, "Why didn't you come back?"

"Shh, I'm here now," he said, looking over her worriedly. Isaac's sword was still lodged in her stomach, and he needed to remove it before he could heal her. Placing a hand on the hilt, Felix looked down at her and said, "This is going to hurt, a lot." Felix tightened his grip, and with a grunt, started pulling the sword out.

"AAAAHH!" Karst screamed in pain, one of her hands clutching at his cloak before falling limp as she passed out. Throwing the sword aside, Felix rapidly gathered his Psynergy and pressed his palm against the gaping hole on her stomach. Closing his eyes in concentration, her murmured "Cure," and watched as his Psynergy flowed down his arm and into her wound, slowly sealing it.

Felix worriedly looked back at Karst's face to find her eyes closed, and her breathing shallowed.

Gently placing her head back into the damp grass, Felix covered her with his cloak, and then picked her up.

"What," Isaac said, retrieving his sword from the grass, and wiping the blood off, "In Venus' name, are you doing!"

Felix felt irritated by Isaac's questioning, yet calmer as he knew Karst wasn't about to die from blood loss, so he took a deep breath before responding. "I'm doing what I would have done for any of my friends, Isaac," he said, heading towards the house he shared with Isaac and Jenna.

"Where are you going?" Isaac asked, walking alongside Felix.

"I'm going home Isaac. I've been wearing the same clothes for a week and a half, and now that they're soaked with blood, I'd like to change."

Isaac gaped at him, "You aren't planning on taking her there, are you?"

"She needs medical attention Isaac, more medical attention than a simple cure spell will fix."

"I am not going to have *that*, staying in my home!"

Felix felt his anger flare, and his normally calm demeanor began to dissolve. He fought his anger back and continued walking, before Isaac ran in front of him and brandished his sword in Felix's direction.

"I'm serious Felix. She attacked me. She wants me dead! I will not allow a murderer, in my home." Felix stared at Isaac a moment, before carefully putting Karst down, and drawing his own sword.

"Isaac, what are you doing?" Jenna asked as she and Garet caught up with the two.

"Are you challenging me, Isaac?" Felix asked, his eyes locked with Isaac's.

Isaac glared back, "I am if you continue. I will not allow her to stay in this town, let alone my home. Look around you Felix! She set the inn on fire! Who knows what other damage she would've caused if I hadn't stepped in."

Felix paused a moment, then sheathed his sword and picked Karst back up. "Jenna," he called out, before gathering his Psynergy. He shuffled through the pocket on his cloak containing the Lapis, until he felt the smooth stone slip between his fingers. Jenna approached him slowly, "Felix, what's going on?"

"I'm taking her to Vault Jenna. I'll be back in a couple days."

"Felix, why are you doing this?"

Felix paused, and turned to her, "Jenna, it's complicated. I'll explain it all when I come back." Jenna nodded and stepped back, and Felix gave on last glare in Isaac's direction, before whispering "Vault," and dissolving out of sight.

So this was a long chapter. At least, longer than the rest. One that was hard to write. So many different ways I could've approached this one. Though I really like the way this turned out. As always, R&R please. And I know there was OOCness in this chapter, but I'm going to base that on the fact that it's been a year and a half.

Also, GS3 comes out at the end of November! :D

Chapter 7: Of Love, the Past, and a New Beginning

So... story is coming close to a close... I'm mildly depressed, and excited at the same time. Oh, and Sunny, I only posted this a year ago... ish.

Chapter 7: Of love, the Past, and a New Beginning

"It's been three days sir."

"I don't care!"

"There's still a chance she won't make it-"

"Bullshit. She's going to make it."

Karst heard two voices, one female, one male, from very far off. They were arguing, but who "she" was Karst couldn't tell.

"What makes her so important? She's Proxian."

Through the fog of her mind, Karst vaguely realized that she was the subject of their argument. Karst attempted to open her eyes, but found that her eyelids were made of lead, so she opted to move instead. However, upon trying this, she found that her limbs were equally as heavy. She noticed though, that the voices sounded much closer, and much clearer.

"Sir?"

"... I'm leaving. If anything changes I'll be at the Inn."

Karst realized she recognized the male voice, but she couldn't remember who it was. She winced as a sharp pain

suddenly stabbed into her stomach, and she felt a tight compression around her entire body. Something soft was touching her hand, and she soon realized it was spreading across her body, until she realized that it was bed linen. She began to wonder why she was in a bed, and why people were arguing about her, until her memories came rushing back.

I was fighting Isaac, and I lost. He was about to kill me, but Felix saved me.

Felix?

Karst started slightly as she felt a warm hand on her hand, and a voice whispering in her ear, "Karst, I'll be back tomorrow. If you wake up between now and then, set the nurse on fire." Suddenly the warmth was gone, and she heard a series of heavy footsteps walking away from her. Summoning all the energy she could, Karst sucked in a breath, and though she tried to call out Felix's name, all that came out was "Nnnnhh.."

The footsteps stopped suddenly, and Karst could almost feel the concern emanating from Felix. "Karst?" He asked tentatively. Karst groggily forced open one eye, and in a flash all of her senses returned. She gasped as the dusk light shining through the window struck her eyes, forcing her to shut them, and as the smell of an overly clean sanctum reached her nose. Hurried footsteps reached her ears, and suddenly Felix was by her side.

"Karst?" He asked again, his voice full of hope.

Karst groaned and forced an eye open again. The light was bearable, and she noticed a fuzzy black shape hovering over her. She blinked a few times, and the shape began to clear,

until she recognized Felix hovering over her, concern and relief etched into his face.

Felix smiled, "Karst, you'r-" Felix was cut off as Karst's hand shot out and connected with his face, sending him reeling backwards.

"Karst what the hell!" Felix exclaimed, falling backwards onto another bed. Suddenly alive with energy and anger, Karst threw the sheets off of her and planted her feet on the ground, testing her legs before she stood up. Blood rushed to her head, however, and she fell back down on the bed. Pain flared in her abdomen, and she winced, hand moving to the bandages covering her body. Felix immediately stood, reaching out a hand to help her. "Here Karst let me help you…"

"Get away from me!" she hissed, smacking his hand away. Felix backed up, looking hurt.

"Karst.." he started, but she cut him off.

"Leave, Felix," she said, clutching the night stand as if she were afraid she would fall.

"Karst," he said, taking another step forward, his arms raised in a 'let me help you' gesture. He stopped when Karst hissed and glared at him, and sighed in defeat.

"I'll be back tomorrow," he said, then quickly left before Karst could tell him not to. Karst sighed and laid back down in bed, her anger still coursing through her body.

Felix left the sanctum and walked back towards the inn, his face still stinging from the slap from Karst.

I suppose I deserved that, he thought, as he threw himself at the inn door. It flew open with a bang, and he wordlessly kicked it behind him and walked to his room, ignoring the few stares he received at creating such a large commotion.

Karst laid back down, prepared to go back to sleep before she noticed the nurse's eyes on her.

"What?" she snapped, the only thing stopping her from conjuring a fireball being that Felix had told her to. The nurse started and ran out of the room, slamming the door behind her. Karst sighed and sunk into her bed, knowing full well that sleep was now an impossibility.

"Stupid Felix," she muttered, looking around the room in hopes that she would find something that would entertain her. Nothing. Crap. Karst sighed and resigned herself to the fact that the only thing she had to look forward to was Felix showing up tomorrow, which, all things considered, wasn't much.

Wait.. Why am I so mad at him? Karst paused and pondered this for a few moments. *He saved my life.. shouldn't I be grateful?*

He left you in Prox when you needed him most, with nothing but an empty promise. Agatio's words echoed around her head, his snarling face appearing in her mind.

*And **we** tried to kill him. I should talk to him. I owe it to him.*

You don't owe him anything!

"He's our friend," she said aloud, although quietly, "and he saved our lives, if you forgot. How can you hate him so

much?" She sighed knowing the answer wasn't coming, and sat back, resigning herself to her fate of boredom.

Felix slammed a fist against the wall, trying to vent some of his frustration.

"It was all for nothing," he muttered, finding himself getting angrier by the second. He glared around his room, wanting to break something but knowing he would only pay for it. He settled for his pack, which was leaning against the foot of the bed. He took two quick steps and kicked it, sending it flying across the room and spilling its contents.

The Djinn naturally started freaking out, and began zipping around the room, squeaking in panic. Felix ignored them and set about picking up the things he had packed, but paused when he saw the mask lying on the floor, completely undamaged. He picked it up and sat on the bed, staring at the green and blue paint that had somehow managed to go without chipping or cracking, despite the few years it had been.

"*Felix!" Felix glanced over and saw Karst and Agatio standing apart from the rest of the group. They waved him over, and Karst blushed as he approached.*

"*We uh…" she faltered slightly, "We got something for you."*

Agatio handed over a bundle wrapped in a light cloth, which Felix took with a smile.

Felix pulled the string off the bundle and the cloth fell away to reveal a wooden mask.

"*We uh, we knew how you weren't looking forward to coming home, and we thought we'd make this for you, so*

that way nobody will recognize you."

Felix smiled and tried it on, and was surprised that it fit perfectly.

"*Wow you guys," he said, pulling the mask off, "I don't know what to say.."*

Suddenly Agatio perked up.

"*Hey, is that my mom calling?"*

Felix and Karst both shot him a quizzical look, "I didn't hear anything.." she said, but Agatio dashed off, leaving the two alone in the knee deep snow.

Karst blushed furiously as she realized just what Agatio was doing.

Stupid oaf… *She thought,* I'm going to murder him in a minute.

"*So…" Felix said, as a mildly awkward silence settled over the pair. He was about to continue, when Karst shook her head, and promptly jumped at Felix, wrapping her arms tightly around his chest.*

"*Come back safe, okay Mud-boy? The only person who's allowed to hurt you is me." Before Felix could do anything, she released him and ran off without another word.*

Felix stood suddenly, his anger having vanished, replaced now with a determined resolve. Still ignoring his now slightly calmer Djinn, he walked out of the inn, mask in hand. He didn't get very far, as a small, auburn-haired bundle tackled him and pinned him to the ground.

"J-jenna?" Felix asked as he struggled against her suddenly strong, vice-like grip, "what are you doing here?"

"Finding out what you're doing. It's been two days."

Felix frowned. In truth he hadn't really been planning to go back to Vale at all.

"So," Jenna said, getting off of him as soon as she was sure he wouldn't bolt, "What are you doing here exactly?"

Felix stood and dusted himself off, retrieving his mask off the ground quickly before any harm could befall it.

"Why do you still have that awful thing?" Jenna asked, pointing to it.

"It… I…" Felix sighed and ran a hand down his face, "I just do Jenna."

Jenna frowned, but let it go, "So do I get to know why you ran off with the woman who tried to kill you?"

"I.. I had to," Felix sighed.

"Felix.. You don't owe her anything. She tried to kill you remember? Then she tried to kill Isaac."

"And then he threatened to kill me."

Jenna glared, "You know he wouldn't have done it Felix."

Felix shook his head, "It doesn't matter anyway. Look, Jenna, I need to tell you something..." Jenna cocked her head to the side, gesturing for Felix to continue. Felix took a deep breath and sighed, "I'm not going back to Vale."

Jenna staggered back as if struck. "W-what?" She said, disbelief evident on her face.

"I'm leaving Jenna. Vale isn't the right place for me."

Jenna blinked furiously, "Y-you can't leave Felix. Vale is our home. I-it's where we grew up. I-i.." Jenna trailed off as tears began streaming down her face. Felix stepped forward and wrapped his arms around her as she sobbed into his chest.

"Why?" She sobbed, clutching at his cloak, as if that could stop him.

"I have to Jenna," he said quietly, rubbing her back, "I just.. I can't stay there anymore."

Jenna looked up at him, "W-what's wrong with it? Whatever it is, w-we can fix it Felix."

Felix smiled, despite the pain in his heart, "Jenna, it wouldn't work. You and I both know that."

"But Felix…"

Little did Felix or Jenna know, but their exchange was being watched by someone who had gimped their way to the window, and watched with a mix of jealousy and anger.

Why do I wish I was the one he was holding?

She watched as they broke their embrace, and his sister walked off towards the inn, and then panicked as she watched him continue towards the inn.

Oh shit oh shit oh shit! Karst gimped her way over to the small vanity mirror next to her bed and began running her

fingers through her hair, trying to get the snags and knots out of her tangled hair. Too soon, she heard his footsteps outside her door, and she threw herself in bed, throwing the sheets over her as he opened the door. She faced away from the door, trying to look asleep as her face was contorted in pain from moving too quickly.

"Karst?" Felix asked, stepping inside and shutting the door behind him quietly. She didn't move, and he slowly walked over to her bed, pulling up a short stool to sit on. Felix noticed that she still wore her hair in the bobbed cut she had when she was traveling with Agatio. He watched her for a few moments, a small part of him fearing that this was the last time he would ever get to see her. Ignoring his fear, he took a deep breath, and spoke.

"I'm sorry Karst," he said softly, not wanting to wake her, yet at the same time, wanting her to hear what he had to say. "I'm sorry for everything. For the Jupiter Lighthouse, for the Mars lighthouse, for your sister.." Felix choked on his own words as he realized just how responsible he was for her sister's death. He had stood idly by, and watched as Isaac and his group had sent them plummeting to their deaths.

"What happened at the Venus Lighthouse?" Karst asked, not moving. Felix started slightly, *Has she been awake?*

Felix took a deep breath, and began, "We had reached the aerie, we were about to put the Venus star in when Isaac showed up. They fought… and Isaac won."

"What were you doing?" Her tone was harsh, almost like an accusation.

"I… I was watching Sheba, protecting her," he stated, wishing he had a better answer.

"Why didn't you help them?" her tone had softened, she sounded on the verge of tears. Felix felt guilt tear through his body. He hadn't wanted her to cry.

"I…" Felix paused. He had almost said *'I couldn't'* but he realized he could have. Maybe he wasn't as strong as Isaac, or Saturos and Menardi, but Isaac was his friend. He could have explained the situation. Made them stop. Something. Guilt built up inside him until it filled every square inch of his body, and he suddenly found it very hard to breathe, he stared down at the floor, unable to look at her. "I don't know," he choked out in a whisper. He glanced up as he heard the rustling of sheets, and suddenly she was facing him.

"Karst, listen-"

"Shut up," she commanded, and Felix felt his mouth snap shut. "Don't tell me it's your fault. Nothing said will change what happened. I don't blame you."

Felix felt his eyes widen, and he stared at her in shock, "Karst," he said, ignoring her when she told him to shut up again, "how can you not? How do you not hate me for it?"

"I thought you were dead," she said shakily, taking a shuddering breath. Felix frowned in confusion, not entirely knowing what was going on.

"Sorry, wha- oh," realization struck Felix as what she was talking about became clear. His throat constricted, and he suddenly felt very nervous.

"Karst.." he trailed off, fearing his next words, "what happened at the Jupiter Lighthouse? Why did you attack me?"

"Isaac," she breathed, tears now falling down her face.

"Isaac? What about him?"

Karst clenched a fistful of sheets in her right hand, attempting to fight back her emotions. "You… I didn't get my chance for revenge."

"I stopped you." Karst nodded, then shut her eyes tightly as a fresh wave of tears arrived.

"I thought I killed you!" She cried, her body shaking with her sobs, "I thought you were dead. All for something as stupid as revenge!" She took a breath, and continued, "I thought I had killed the only.." She trailed off, her gaze dropping down to her lap.

"Only what, Karst?" Felix frowned, this wasn't going exactly how he had wanted it to. Karst shot a tear-filled, fearful glance at him and then looked away. Felix frowned again and repeated his question. When she didn't reply, he reached out and placed a hand on her shoulder, pausing for a moment to marvel at how soft it was, when only three days ago it was covered with rough, rock-hard scales. "Karst, please, answer me."

Karst took a deep, shuddering breath and shot another glance at him before returning to staring at her lap, where she found herself fidgeting with the linen. "I was afraid.. afraid I had killed the only man I'd ever loved," she muttered, looking to her left, to the other side of the room. Her heart sank as Felix said nothing, and the sting of rejection made its way into her heart. She couldn't bear to look at the sympathetic look she was sure was on his face. His hand left her shoulder, leaving the skin feeling cold as the cool evening air touched it, but just as soon as it had left her shoulder, it was on her face, gently cupping her left

cheek and tugging slightly to bring her head around to face him. She kept her eyes glued to the floor, hanging her head down to hide her tear-stained face.

"Karst, look at me," he said softly, placing his thumb and forefinger on her chin to raise her face to meet his.

"No," she said, averting her eyes to stare at the wall.

"Karst," he said, reaching out for her hand, which she quickly pulled back, she glanced at him, and found herself staring at the smile on his face. "I love you," he stated simply, trying to reach for her hand again. Karst stared at him in shock, disbelief evident on her face.

"Y-you can't," she said, struggling to register the meaning of his words.

Felix's lips curved into a light smile, "Oh? And why not?"

"You're supposed to hate me."

Felix chuckled, amused by the absurdity of her idea. At least, until the hand he had been previously trying to hold smacked him in the face. Felix fell off of the stool, and found himself staring up at the suddenly enraged face of Karst.

"Six seasons," she seethed, "A year and a half. It has been a year and a half, and you expect to just walk up, tell me you love me, and I'm supposed to swoon and fall into your arms!"

Felix raised a hand to defend himself, "Karst, I-"

"Where the hell were you?" She thundered, not caring that a healer who had come in with a lit matchstick screamed and ran out, dropping the matchstick in the process. Felix

dropped his hand and looked away guiltily, before closing his eyes.

"Well?" Karst demanded, the matchstick flaring brightly as her anger increased. Felix sighed, and opened his mouth.

"I didn't know if you were alive."

Karst stopped, and the flame in the corner dimmed, throwing darkness over the pair.

"The.. the healers, they told me that there was no way they could tell. They were able to feed you but… Karst you were asleep, and it looked like you weren't going to wake up. I left because I needed to know what happened to Vale, and when I got there… I was too afraid to return. I was too afraid they were going to tell me that you were dead."

Karst sat back, finding herself unable to look him in the eye, so she settled for her lap. After a few moments, Felix righted the stool and sat back on it, then broke the silence.

"Karst?"

"I need you to leave, Felix."

"What?" Karst looked up at Felix, then quickly looked away, unable to bear the broken-hearted look on his face.

"I just… I need some time to think." Karst looked back at him and nearly broke down into tears at the look on Felix's face. Staring back at her was a pair of dead, emotionless eyes. Eyes that were usually soft and caring. His expression betrayed the amount of pain she had caused him, and Karst looked away before she started crying.

"No," he said quietly, so quietly Karst wasn't sure she heard him correctly. "I'm not leaving Karst."

Karst stared at him in shock, "What?"

Felix pulled the stool closer to the bed, and gently took her hand in both of his. Despite everything, Karst didn't pull it back. "I'm not leaving Karst. I left you once before, and I spent a year and a half in misery because of it. I'm not letting that happen again." He leaned in as if to kiss her, but Karst raised her free hand and placed it in his way.

"And what if I don't want you?" She asked.

Felix looked down for a moment, then back up at her, his eyes betraying his fear. "Do you really mean that Karst?"

Karst paused a moment as a myriad of thoughts ran through her head.

Do I really want to be with him?

How will Agatio react to this?

What about my sister and Isaac? He can't expect me to forgive him.

Oh hell who am I kidding?

"No," she whispered, a small smile forming on her lips as a warmth spread through her, banishing all dark thoughts and feelings.

"Then… you'll have me?" Felix asked, a hopeful smile forming on his lips.

Karst smiled and leaned close to his face. "Yes," she whispered, before softly pressing her lips against his.

The next morning, a scream awoke the entire sanctum as a nurse walked in on two sleeping forms. One Valean, the other Proxian, both in the same bed, arms wrapped around each other, with identical smiles painted on their sleeping faces.

Fin.

A/N: Woooo! I apologize for the long time it took to update! Life is a royal pain sometimes! Anyway, there will be a short epilogue coming. You guys have been great, honestly, you have been the best readers of any of my stories.

Chapter 8: Epilogue

Epilogue:

Felix groaned as sunlight filtered in through the window in the small room, blinding him. He leaned down to bury his face into his pillow, only to get a face full of red hair.

"Time to get up. Or were you just planning on sleeping all day?"

Felix tried to move his left arm, but failed. Her body weight had cut off the circulation to his arm overnight, leaving it numb and useless. "I wouldn't mind sleeping a little longer." She rolled over and looked him in the eye, a pout in her eyes and a playful smirk on her lips. Felix knew that look, "Or did you have something else in mind?" She responded by wrapping an arm around his neck and pulling him in for a kiss. He used his free arm to pull her body against his, simultaneously freeing his other arm so blood could resume flowing.

"My arm went numb overnight," he explained when she gave him a weird look after he had interrupted them to flex the feeling back into it.

Karst pouted a little, "What if that's what I had wanted?"

Felix frowned, "Why would you want that?"

"Well," she said, smiling, "Your arm isn't what needs blood the most right now, is it?" She laughed as Felix's eyes widened, and leaned in for a less than innocent kiss.

Later, with Karst's head on his chest and an arm around her shoulders, he nudged her slightly. "Are you awake?"

She let out a soft "Mmmhmm," and a slight nod, signaling that she was about to drop off.

"I love you," he said softly, before planting a soft kiss on the top of her head.

"I love you too," she said sleepily, snuggling closer to his body before falling asleep.

So! End of story. Yay!

Martin III: Thank you so much for your detailed and well thought out reviews. You helped me immensely throughout the fic and I am eternally grateful to you for that. So I hope your honorable mention will suffice for now.